UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/50/176
27 February 1996

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 112 (b)

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/50/635/Add.2)]

50/176. National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights concerning national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights,

Stressing the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1/ the International Covenants on Human Rights 2/ and other international instruments for promoting respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Convinced of the important role national institutions play in promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms and in developing and enhancing public awareness of those rights and freedoms,

Mindful in this regard of the guidelines on the structure and functioning of national and local institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/46 of 14 December 1978,

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 3/ in which the World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed the important and constructive

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1/ Resolution 217 A (III).

2/ Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

3/ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

role played by national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular in their advisory capacity to the competent authorities, their role in remedying human rights violations, in the dissemination of human rights information and in education in human rights,

Noting the diverse approaches adopted throughout the world for the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level, emphasizing the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights, and emphasizing and recognizing the value of such approaches to promoting universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recalling the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, as contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993, and recognizing the need for their continued dissemination,

Welcoming the growing interest shown worldwide in the creation and strengthening of independent and pluralistic national institutions,

Recognizing that the United Nations plays an important role in assisting the development of national institutions,

Noting with satisfaction the constructive participation of representatives of a number of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in international seminars and workshops,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the updated report of the Secretary-General; 4/

2. Reaffirms the importance of the development of effective, independent and pluralistic national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in keeping with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and, inter alia, the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 48/134, and recognizes that it is the right of each State to choose the framework that is best suited to its particular needs at the national level;

3. Encourages Member States to establish or, where they already exist, to strengthen national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, as outlined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and, where appropriate, to incorporate those elements in national development plans or in their preparation of national action plans;

4. Encourages national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights established by Member States to prevent and combat all violations of human rights as enumerated in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and relevant international instruments;

5. Affirms the role of national institutions, where they exist, as appropriate agencies for the dissemination of human rights materials and public information activities, including those of the United Nations;

4/ A/50/452.

6. Requests the Secretary-General to give high priority to requests from Member States for assistance in the establishment and strengthening of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights as part of the programme of advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights, and invites Governments to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance in the Field of Human Rights for these purposes;

7. Notes the role of the coordinating committee created by national institutions at the second International Workshop on National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, held at Tunis from 13 to 17 December 1993, in close cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, to assist Governments and institutions, when requested, to follow up on relevant resolutions and recommendations concerning the strengthening of national institutions;

8. Also notes the importance of finding an appropriate form of participation by national institutions in relevant United Nations meetings dealing with human rights;

9. Recognizes the important and constructive role that non-governmental organizations may play, in cooperation with national institutions, for the better promotion and protection of human rights;

10. Encourages all Member States to take appropriate steps to promote the exchange of information and experience concerning the establishment and effective operation of such national institutions;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

99th plenary meeting
22 December 1995